RuneQuest

PLAYER'S UPDATE

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The purpose of this PDF is to ensure that everyone is playing the same version of RuneQuest.
Changes in this document should be considered official changes to the RuneQuest core rules.
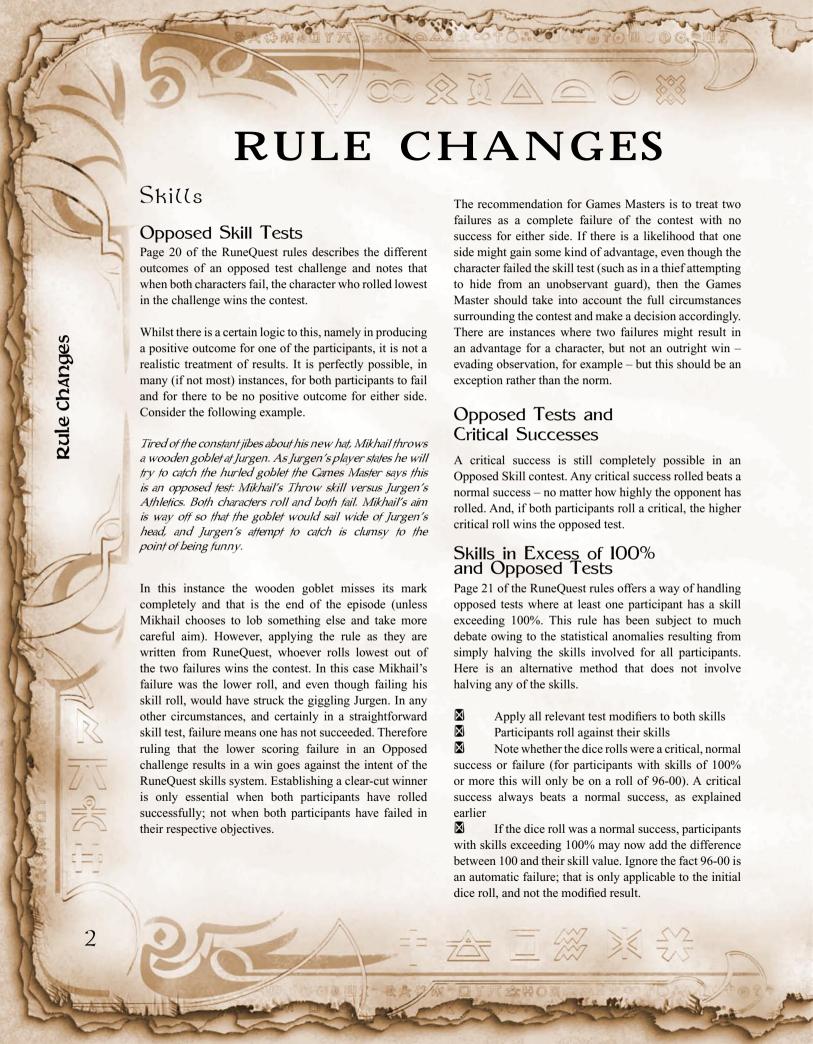
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RULE CHANGES

Skills

Opposed Skill Tests

Page 20 of the RuneQuest rules describes the different outcomes of an opposed test challenge and notes that when both characters fail, the character who rolled lowest in the challenge wins the contest.

Whilst there is a certain logic to this, namely in producing a positive outcome for one of the participants, it is not a realistic treatment of results. It is perfectly possible, in many (if not most) instances, for both participants to fail and for there to be no positive outcome for either side. Consider the following example.

Tired of the constant jibes about his new hat, Mikhail throws a wooden goblet at Jurgen. As Jurgen's player states he will try to catch the hurled goblet the Games Master says this is an opposed test: Mikhail's Throw skill versus Jurgen's Athletics. Both characters roll and both fail. Mikhail's aim is way off so that the goblet would sail wide of Jurgen's head, and Jurgen's attempt to catch is clumsy to the point of being funny.

In this instance the wooden goblet misses its mark completely and that is the end of the episode (unless Mikhail chooses to lob something else and take more careful aim). However, applying the rule as they are written from RuneQuest, whoever rolls lowest out of the two failures wins the contest. In this case Mikhail's failure was the lower roll, and even though failing his skill roll, would have struck the giggling Jurgen. In any other circumstances, and certainly in a straightforward skill test, failure means one has not succeeded. Therefore ruling that the lower scoring failure in an Opposed challenge results in a win goes against the intent of the RuneQuest skills system. Establishing a clear-cut winner is only essential when both participants have rolled successfully; not when both participants have failed in their respective objectives.

The recommendation for Games Masters is to treat two failures as a complete failure of the contest with no success for either side. If there is a likelihood that one side might gain some kind of advantage, even though the character failed the skill test (such as in a thief attempting to hide from an unobservant guard), then the Games Master should take into account the full circumstances surrounding the contest and make a decision accordingly. There are instances where two failures might result in an advantage for a character, but not an outright win – evading observation, for example – but this should be an exception rather than the norm.

Opposed Tests and Critical Successes

A critical success is still completely possible in an Opposed Skill contest. Any critical success rolled beats a normal success – no matter how highly the opponent has rolled. And, if both participants roll a critical, the higher critical roll wins the opposed test.

Skills in Excess of 100% and Opposed Tests

Page 21 of the RuneQuest rules offers a way of handling opposed tests where at least one participant has a skill exceeding 100%. This rule has been subject to much debate owing to the statistical anomalies resulting from simply halving the skills involved for all participants. Here is an alternative method that does not involve halving any of the skills.

☒ Apply all relevant test modifiers to both skills
☒ Participants roll against their skills
☒ Note whether the dice rolls were a critical, normal success or failure (for participants with skills of 100% or more this will only be on a roll of 96-00). A critical success always beats a normal success, as explained earlier
☒ If the dice roll was a normal success, participants with skills exceeding 100% may now add the difference between 100 and their skill value. Ignore the fact 96-00 is an automatic failure; that is only applicable to the initial dice roll, and not the modified result.

Important Changes to Persistence and Resilience

The following changes to the Persistence and Resilience skills have been made following a great deal of playtesting and analysis of how the skills work in play. They constitute a recommended revision of the rules to introduce greater game balance and accuracy, based upon countless hours of playtesting and discussion.

Persistence and Resilience

Whilst described as skills, both Persistence and Resilience are a combination of natural capability, personal fortitude and training to deal with situations involving mental and physical stress, including pain. All of us have untapped reserves of Persistence and Resilience; these skills measure the character's ability to draw upon them to resist a variety of different pressures and conditions.

There are, however, limits to mental and physical endurance; barriers beyond which the mind and body cannot be pushed and surrender becomes inevitable. To represent this, Persistence cannot exceed the value of a creature's POW Characteristic multiplied by 5, and Resilience cannot exceed the CON Characteristic multiplied by five. The starting values for each skill are both calculated as per RuneQuest, but they are now no longer 'limitless' skills. Of course, their limits can be extended through the improvement of their respective Characteristic scores.

Alternative Persistence and Resilience

A possible alternative method for determining Persistence and Resilience is the one used in our *Elric* and *Hawkmoon* lines. Under this system, the base scores for Persistence and Resilience are as follows:

Persistence = 30 + CHA + POW
Resilience = 30 + CON + POW

However, these skills now advance more slowly than others and only gain a single point with a successful Improvement Roll. If the roll fails, nothing is gained. The skill caps mentioned above are still in effect.

Resisting Magic

The effects of a spell can be resisted by a character, as noted in the spell's description. Spell Resistance is an opposed test between the spell caster's skill with the spell and the target's appropriate skill. This represents the spell caster's expertise in weaving a strong, magical effect that can overcome a target's innate resistance, and the target's ability to call upon the necessary reserves to counter the spell.

Overcharging Spells

If a spell has been overcharged, and the target also succeeds in the opposed test, but has the lower roll, the spell takes effect only at its base value; the additional Magnitude of the spell is successfully resisted.

Combat

Opposed Test Combats

Any combat, close quarters or ranged, is effectively an opposed test, matching the skills of the attacker against the skill of the defender. Thus, to resolve a combat sequence, the opposed test mechanics described in main RuneQuest rules are now used in place of a straightforward test against individual skills.

However, because the nature of combat requires a detailed analysis of the result between the winner and loser of the opposed test, it is still necessary to cross-reference the result on a combat results matrix, as is the case using the standard RuneQuest mechanics. But, there are some important differences to note if opposed tests are used to handle combat.

⊠   In a real combat the decision to parry or dodge is made in a split second and is very often in anticipation to an incoming attack, irrespective of whether the blow will strike. Because RuneQuest combat is an abstraction of what really happens in a battle, such decisions need to be made as part of the general statements of intent before attack and defensive rolls are made. This means that you should remove the word 'successful' from the Trigger Event section of the descriptions of the Dodge and Parry Reactions on pages 50 and 51 of the RuneQuest rules.

Dodge Table

		Attacker's Result			
		Critical	*Success*	*Fail*	*Fumble*
Defender's Result	*Critical*	Attack succeeds but causes minimum damage.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker is Overextended.	Attack fails. Attacker is Overextended. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	Success	Attack succeeds.	Attack succeeds but causes minimum damage.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	Fail	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage. Defender forced to Give Ground.	Attack succeeds. Defender forced to Give Ground.	Attack fails. Defender forced to Give Ground	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	Fumble	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble table.	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Both sides roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.

☒ Both participants in the combat need to make a test against their respective skills, having first declared their intentions. For an attacker this is straightforward: 'I try to hit the broo with my sword'. For a defender the statement needs to be explicit: 'I will try to parry the broo's axe' or 'I try to dodge the broo's axe because my sword is already damaged'.

☒ The attack and defence rolls are then made simultaneously by the combatants and the results compared according to the opposed test mechanics: as usual a Critical Success always beats a normal success, but if the success levels are equal, the higher Success roll wins and the lower roll is demoted by one level. I.e. if both combatants roll a normal success, then the higher roll remains a success, but the lower roll is downgraded to a failure, or if both roll a critical success the lower roll is downgraded to a normal success. This may seem unfair when both combatants have succeeded, but it is a logical outcome. In such situations the winning opponent has exhibited either greater luck or greater competence, and turned the situation to his advantage.

☒ If one of the combatants has a weapon skill in excess of 100%, and the skill is a standard success, the skill's value in excess of 100 is added to the result of the dice roll, increasing the chances of victory in the Opposed contest.

☒ Where the participants tie: i.e. the result of the Opposed roll, taking into account all modifiers, is an identical score, and the level of failure or success is the same, then both have achieved the same result on the appropriate combat matrix.

☒ The outcome of each combatant's roll is compared on the table appropriate for the defensive method being used and the results applied.

Parry Table

		Attacker's Result			
		Critical	*Success*	*Fail*	*Fumble*
Defender's Result	*Critical*	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage, reduced by twice the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack succeeds, damage is reduced by twice the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack fails. Defender may Riposte.	Attack fails. Defender may Riposte. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	Success	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage, reduced by the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack succeeds, damage is reduced by the AP of the parrying weapon.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	Fail	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage.	Attack succeeds.	Attack fails.	Attack fails. Attacker must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.
	Fumble	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack succeeds and causes maximum damage. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Defender must roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.	Attack fails. Both sides roll on the appropriate Fumble Table.

Maximum Damage = maximum weapon damage + damage modifier rolled normally

Minimum Damage = minimum weapon damage + damage modifier rolled normally

If not otherwise specified, roll damage normally.

Combat Fumbles

Fumbling during a combat can have disastrous results. Depending on the opponent's degree of success or failure, a Fumble always results in a roll on the appropriate Fumble table at the very least.

There are three Fumble tables; one for Close Combat fumbles (including dodges and parries), one for Natural Weapons and one for Ranged Weapons. When a Fumble occurs, roll on the appropriate Fumble table for the action involved. Reroll if the result seems inappropriate for the activity being conducted, or improvise!

Close Combat Fumble Table

1D20	Result	Effect
1-3	Falter	Lose next Combat Action.
4-6	Drop Weapon	Weapon falls 1D4 metres away.
7-9	Lose Balance	Lose next 1D3 Combat Actions.
10-12	Damage Weapon	Weapon takes damage from opponent's parrying weapon. Else weapon strikes an inanimate object (tree, wall, ground, etc) and does damage to itself.
13-14	Stumble	Trip and fall prone. Forfeit next 1D3 Combat Actions. All defensive actions at a –20% penalty.
15-16	Lose Armour	Roll for hit location to determine where the armour fell from. If not armoured, roll again.
17	Hit Ally	Accidentally strike a nearby companion for normal rolled damage. If no ally within reach, hit self instead.
18	Break Weapon	The weapon strikes the ground, a wall, or a similar surface capable of causing damaging. The weapon takes 1D10 points of damage, plus the user's Damage Modifier, but reduced by the AP of the weapon. Roll three times.
19	Hit Self	Inadvertently hit own hit location for normal rolled damage, plus Damage Modifier.
20	Unlucky	Roll twice on this table.

Natural Weapon Fumbles

1D20	Result	Effect
01-03	Hesitate	Lose next Combat Action.
04-06	Numb Limb	Limb is temporarily paralysed until a successful Resilience roll is made, starting next Comabt Action.
07-09	Entangle Self	Lose next 1D3 Combat Actions.
10-12	Damage Limb	Limb is injured from striking opponent's parrying weapon, armour or an inanimate object (tree, wall, ground, etc) and does damage to itself.
13-14	Sprawl	Trip and fall prone. Forfeit next 1d3 Combat Actions. All defensive actions at a –20% penalty.
15-16	Break Limb	Limb is reduced to –1 hit points (a Serious Wound).
17-18	Hit Ally	Accidentally strike a nearby companion for normal rolled damage. If no ally within reach, damage is done to self instead from wrenching a random location.
19	Fated	Roll twice on this table.
20	Cursed	Roll three times on this table.

Ranged Weapon Fumbles

1D20	Result	Effect
1-2	Disoriented	Attacker loses next Combat Action.
4-6	Drop Weapon	Weapon falls 1D2 metres away.
7-9	Snare Weapon	Lose next 1D3 Combat Actions.
10-12	Lose Weapon	Weapon string either snaps or weapon is lost when thrown.
13-14	Damage Weapon	Weapon when fired or thrown suffers rolled damage to itself.
15-16	Hit Ally	Accidentally strike a nearby companion for normal rolled damage.
17-18	Misfire	Inflict normal damage on self.
19	Bedevilled	Roll twice on this table.
20	Damned	Roll three times on this table.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Skills

Q: In an Opposed Skill Test, if both characters fail or if they both succeed and they both roll the same number, what happens?

A: Roll again, unless you are comparing combat rolls. In that case, see above.

Equipment

Q: When is a character's Damage Modifier applied to ranged weapons?

A: All the time, except when listed as being otherwise in the weapon's description (such as with the blowgun).

Combat

Q: Can Armour reduce the damage from a weapon to 0?

A: Yes.

Q: Can Armour reduce the damage from a weapon to less than 0? That would mean a hit would heal you, right?

A: Nice try, but no.

Magic

Q: The rules say you cannot remove someone's integrated rune, but they also seem to indicate that they are physical objects that you bind to. What stops enemies just taking them?

A: Nothing, really! Once a rune has been integrated to one character, it can never be integrated with someone else, unless the first character dies. You can never take that away from someone. However, a rune has to be in the physical possession of a character to gain its runic power. If he leaves it at home or it is stolen, it is still integrated (cannot take that away, remember) but he no longer has the benefits of its runic power. Also, a rune needs to be actually held in order to use it for runecasting – having it in your pocket is not enough.

Q: What is the implication of a character integrating a Chaos rune? I'm sure you'll appreciate that, from a Gloranthan perspective, the concept sounds very dodgy indeed – what is the intention here?

A: No intention other than what is written in the rulebook. Remember, this is a generic set of rules that can cover a variety of settings. Glorantha will be covered in its own range of books, which are based upon the foundation of these rules, but are not slaved to it.